

Battered Wanderers Check Rivals After Two Are Helped Off

Wycombe Wanderers 1, Sutton United 1

WYCOMBE WANDERERS expected it to be tough at the top — and it was certainly that for them on Saturday in a rough-and-tumble crucial clash against their closest challengers, Sutton United, who mixed it mercilessly.

The Wanderers finished with ten men, one of them the substitute, and a couple of crocks—and one hard-earned point.

Back in the dressing room, licking their wounds, were reserve right-back Peter Eyres, injured after half-an-hour and replaced by substitute Vic Sherbourne, and left-back Peter Roystone, carried off by stretcher early in the second-half with a torn ligament in the ankle. And hobbling along the wings were Worley and Merrick, other victims of clashes in the mud.

With feeling running so high at one stage, the referee called some of the players together to deliver a homily on the perils of exuberance, but it only slightly tempered the furious tempo of second-half rivalry as the league's leading contenders struggled for supremacy.

AGAINST ODDS

Unlucky Wanderers suffered most of the casualties and, all in all, they did well to keep a point in their battle against odds in the last half-an-hour.

It was in fact a struggle for the home side right from the start after Sutton's resourceful inside-right Bladon had caught the defence napping to nip through for a shock goal in the first minute of the game.

Goalkeeper Shewring made several smart saves before Wycombe were back on terms in the 16th minute with a classic goal from Tony Horseman—a beautifully timed header from a copybook centre from Worley.

Some of the football was of remarkably high order in view of the heavy going. The winning drill

was obviously to keep it on the less cloying fringes of the pitch, where the wing men were certainly in bright form on both sides.

But Wycombe's second set-back came after half-an-hour, when Peter Eyres went off with a recurrence of an old ankle injury, but the Wanderers survived — and came out fighting again in the second-half.

Two more clashes floored first Merrick and then Worley within a few minutes of the resumption, in some rugged free-for-all which brought strong vocal reaction from the crowd—and a lecture from the referee.

Then another joust put Roystone out and had the Wanderers really up against it in the last 20 minutes.

For a time the Wanderers had only two forwards up-field to do what they could with the occasional breakaway. But Baker and Gale, and often Busby and Samuels too, did not spare themselves as reinforcements for Rundle and Sherbourne in a gallant defence, and Sutton were well held.

Before the end the Wanderers were hitting back again, with Worley only inches wide with a shot from Horseman's pass, and Merrick injured a second time in a desperate bid from a corner-kick in a furious climax.

Wycombe Wanderers:— J. Maskell; P. Eyres, P. Roystone; B. Baker, I. Rundle, C. Gale; L. Worley, K. Samuels, V. Busby, A. Horseman, L. Merrick.